

Message Text

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ACTION CU-05

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TO USIA WASHDC

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USIAC

E.O. 11652 N/A

SUBJ: BASKETBALL/TRACK TEACHING TOUR

REF: PAO LETTER #46

FOR INA

1. VERY SUCCESSFUL VISIT OF CU BASKETBALL/TRACK COACHES ENDED OVER WEEKEND WITH FOND FAREWELLS ALL AROUND AND REQUESTS FROM SRI LANKA OFFICIALS AND ATHLETES FOR MORE SUCH VISITS REGULARLY FROM UNITED STATES. MINISTER OF SPORTS, SPEAKING AT AMBASSADOR'S RECEPTION FOR OFFICIALS AND PARTICIPANTS, REITERATED SENTIMENTS EXPRESSED WHEREVER COACHES WENT. "WE CEYLONSE, LIVING IN A SMALL LAND, LOOK TOWARDS AMERICA FOR LEADERSHIP, ADVISE AND ASSISTANCE IN SPORTS FIELD AND MANY OTHER FIELDS. ALL OF US ARE VERY APPRECIATIVE OF THE EFFORTS THE STATE DEPARTMENT, USIS AND THE AMERICAN COACHES THEMSELVES PUT OUT ON OUR BEHALF. I HOPE THESE VISITS WILL CONTINUE AS THEY

ARE OF GREAT BENEFIT TO US."

2. BASKETBALL PORTION OF TOUR WAS MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN TRACK COMPONENT FROM STANDPOINT OF ABILITY U.S. COACHES CONDUCT ORGANIZED CLINICS FOR LARGE NUMBER PARTICIPANTS. BASKETBALL CLINICS WERE HELD IN COLOMBO, KANDY AND JAFFNA WITH HIGH
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LEVEL SUCCESS EACH LOCATION. THREE EXCELLENT FILMS THEY

BROUGHT WERE WIDELY SHOWN. TRACK PORTION TOUR RAN INTO DIFFICULTIES ARISING FROM FACT THAT SPORTS MINISTRY AND AMATEUR ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION WERE PREOCCUPIED WITH ISLANDWIDE SPORTS FESTIVAL AT ANURADHAPURA ON WEEKEND COACHES ARRIVED AND WITH AUGUST 26 DEPARTURE OF SRI LANKA ASIAN GAMES SQUAD. WST THEREFORE TOOK TRACK COACHES TO REGIONAL SPORTS FESTIVAL SO THEY COULD MEET CEYLONSE COACHES AND OFFICIALS AND OBSERVE TRACK EVENTS. THIS WAS EFFECTIVE WAY TO PERSONALIZE VISIT OF TRACK COACHES AND TO OFFSET SOMEWHAT THE LIMITED SUCCESSES AT CAMPS HELD IN COLOMBO BALANCE WEEK AFTER SPORTS FESTIVAL.

3. PRESS AND RADIO COVERAGE WAS GOOD FROM BEGINNING WITH MENTION BY ALL MEDIA ON FIRST WEEKEND THAT AMERICAN TRACK COACHES MADE SPECIAL TRIP TO WITNESS FESTIVAL. ALL COACHES INTERVIEWED FOR SLBC SPORTS PROGRAMS. POST VIDEOTAPED HIGHLIGHTS OF WEEK'S ACTIVITIES FOR SHOWING AT AMBASSADOR'S RECEPTION. AUDIENCE WAS IMPRESSED BY USEFULNESS OF VTR IN CAPTURING LIVE SPORTS, AND MINISTER DISCUSSED USE OF VTR FOR SPORTS TRAINING WITH IO AT LENGTH.

4. POST PLEASED BY CALIBER ALL COACHES. OVERALL SUCCESS OF PROGRAM WAS DUE IN LARGE PART TO FACT THEY WERE DEDICATED, FLEXIBLE, PERSONABLE MEN WITH ABILITY TO ESTABLISH RAPPORT AND EXPRESS NATURAL INTEREST IN SRI LANKA SPORTS AND ATHLETES IN SHORT TIME. VISIT AGAIN DEMONSTRATED VALUE OF SPORTS AS EFFECTIVE CATALYST FOR INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING. WE HOPE AGENCY AND DEPARTMENT CAN ARRANGE SUCH VISITS PERIODICALLY. BRIGGS

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